



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Social Services

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Courier 56-20-25 Fax 919-715-0023

Michael F. Easley, Governor  
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal, Director  
(919) 733-3055

July 8, 2003

**Dear County Director of Social Services:**

**Subject: Special Assistance In-Home Program Expansion**

The Division of Social Services announces a Request for Proposals to participate in the Special Assistance In-Home Program. If you are interested in participating in this program, please complete the attached Response for Proposal form and return it no later than the close of business on **August 15, 2003**.

If your county is currently participating in the SA In-Home Program, you do not need to submit a Response for Proposal form to continue your participation. However, if you wish to request additional slots, please complete the attached Request for Additional SA In-Home Program Slots and return it no later than the close of business on **August 15, 2003**.

**BACKGROUND**

The General Assembly in 1999 authorized the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct a demonstration project in which State/County Special Assistance for Adults funds can be used for payments to eligible individuals in in-home living arrangements. The SA In-Home Program provides an alternative to adult care home placement when an assessment indicates the individual can remain at home safely with appropriate services and the individual chooses to stay at home rather than enter an adult care home.

The SA In-Home Program originally allowed payments for up to 400 individuals. In 2000, county departments of social services were offered the option to participate. Twenty-two counties submitted proposals and were selected to participate. The SA In-Home Program was scheduled to end on June 30, 2003. However, the 2003 General Assembly has authorized continuation of the program through June 30, 2005 with an expansion to 800 slots statewide.

If you would like more information on the SA In-Home Program, the “Special Assistance Demonstration Project Final Report to the General Assembly” is available on the Division of Social Services website at <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/>. This report provides data on the characteristics of the individuals receiving assistance, such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, educational levels, living arrangements, cognitive patterns, and mental health and other service needs. The report also describes how case management is provided and a cost analysis of providing SA payments to eligible individuals at home versus an adult care home.

The North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services supports expansion of the SA In-Home Program and advocated for this during the 2003 session of the General Assembly.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE SA IN-HOME PROGRAM**

### Client Eligibility

1. Individuals with incomes at or below 100% of the federal poverty level, and who meet all other eligibility criteria for Special Assistance, are financially eligible for Special Assistance payments in in-home living arrangements. The current federal poverty level is \$749 and increases each year in April.

This income level (need standard) is lower than the income level for individuals receiving Special Assistance in adult care homes. The current SA income level for individuals in adult care homes is \$1,127 (150% FPL). The General Assembly set the income level for the SA In-Home Program at 100% FPL to keep it consistent with the Medicaid income level for private living arrangements. Individuals with income between 101%-150% FPL are not eligible for the SA In-Home payment but are eligible for payment in an Adult Care Home.

2. The minimum payment in the SA In-Home Program is \$5.00.
3. Applicants must have a current FL-2, signed by a physician, indicating adult care home level of care. In addition, a social worker must conduct a face-to-face assessment at the applicant’s home using the Resident Assessment Instrument-Home Care (RAI-HC) tool. The assessment must indicate that the individual can live at home safely with appropriate care and services.
4. Current policies and procedures for age, disability, citizenship, residence, resources, income, changes in situation, notices and appeals and fraud apply to SA In-Home applicants and recipients unless the SA In-Home policies and procedures indicate otherwise. The primary difference between policies for the SA In-Home Program and for SA in an adult care home is the lower income limit and the determination of the payment amount.

5. When an individual applies for Special Assistance, the caseworker will discuss the in-home option with him and if he is interested refer him to the Adult Services case manager for assessment. The case manager will conduct a face-to-face assessment at the client's home, using the RAI-HC assessment tool. Based on the outcome of the assessment, the case manager will authorize or deny the SA In-Home payment with the SA caseworker.
6. Counties who participate in the SA In-Home Program will use their existing Special Assistance budgets to make payments to eligible individuals who are at risk of entering an adult care home, but who choose to remain at home when an assessment shows they can do so safely with appropriate services. The program will not add any cost to the Special Assistance program. There are costs savings because the SA payment for in-home services is less than the SA payment for care in an adult care home. According to the data gathered from the current SA In-Home Program, between August 2000 and September 2002 the average monthly SA payment for in-home services was \$184 and the average monthly SA payment for adult care home was \$426.

### Case Management

County departments who participate in the SA In-Home Program must provide case management for eligible individuals who receive SA at home. Medicaid At-Risk Case Management, SSBG, or other available funding sources can be used to provide the required case management. An average of 1½ hours of case management per month has been provided to the SA In-Home recipients.

The case manager will use the following guidelines for working with recipients and their families.

1. The Resident Assessment Instrument for Home Care (RAI-HC) will be used by the DSS Adult Services staff to assess SA applicants at risk of entering an adult care home but who prefer to continue living at home. The RAI-HC software will be provided to the counties participating in the SA In-Home Program and training will be provided on use of the tool. The case manager authorizes or denies approvals for SA In-Home payments, based on the assessment.

The two laptop computers that were issued to all county DSS's in 2000 for Resident Evaluation Services may be used for the SA In-Home Program or you may use another laptop that meet the specifications for running the RAI-HC assessment software. Because the RAI-HC software was designed to be used on a laptop computer that can be taken to the client's home, the original specifications for the software do not allow the laptop to be run from a network. The required specifications for operating the SA In-Home assessment software may be obtained by contacting Jackie Franklin, SA Program Coordinator, at 919-733-3677.

2. The SA payment to individuals living at home is a supplement to their income in the form of a cash payment (just as it is a supplement to individuals entering adult care homes). The payment is intended to help the individual continue living at home and can be used for items or expenses related to achieving this goal. It can be used to cover items or expenses such as food, shelter, home repairs, minor home modifications (such as ramps, rails, grab bars), clothing, utilities, medical expenses and transportation not covered by Medicaid, and other

daily necessities. The case manager authorizes specific items or expenses for which the SA In-Home payment can be used and monitors use of the payments.

3. The SA payment to individuals living in in-home living arrangements can be made to individuals living in the following types of residences: privately owned or rented home; apartment; congregate housing; multi-unit housing with services; public or subsidized housing; shared group residence; home-sharing arrangement.
4. Elderly & disabled adults with income at or below 100% FPL who meet other criteria are eligible for Medicaid. They are eligible for and can receive Medicaid funded services, such as Personal Care Services and case management, that allow them to stay at home when they choose this and can do so safely. (Likewise, when Medicaid recipients live in adult care homes, Medicaid pays the facility for Personal Care Services, including Enhanced Personal Care Services, for medical transportation, and for other Medicaid-funded services.) There are also funding sources other than Medicaid that can be used to provide the in-home services that are needed by SA recipients living at home, such as Personal Care Services, Home Health Services, Adult Day Care, Medical Transportation, etc. These funding sources include SSBG, State In-Home Services Fund, State Adult Day Care Fund, and Home and Community Care Block Grant funds.
5. Individuals qualifying for SA at home will have a choice of continuing to live at home or moving to an adult care home. Current SA recipients residing in adult care homes are also eligible for the in-home payment if they choose to return to a private living arrangement and can do so safely.
6. Reports, as needed, will be sent by county DSS's participating in the SA In-Home Program to the Division of Social Services.

### Training

The Division will provide required training for all counties participating in the SA In-Home Program. There will be a day long introductory training in Raleigh for all staff working with the SA In-Home Program, including SA eligibility case workers, social work case managers and supervisors. There will also be an additional day long training for the case managers in the use of the RAI-HC assessment tool. It is essential that staff attend these training sessions. The Division also plans to conduct ongoing annual SA In-Home training to accommodate changes in county staff and updates in the policy, procedures and software.

### **EVALUATION**

The purpose of the continuation and expansion of the SA In-Home Program is to determine whether this program can offer a financially viable in-home service option that will allow people to choose, when possible, whether to continue living at home or enter an adult care home. As directed in the legislation authorizing continuation of the Special Assistance In-Home Program, the Division must prepare a report to the General Assembly on the following:

- ✓ A description of cost savings that result from allowing individuals eligible for State/County SA the option of remaining in the home.

- ✓ A complete fiscal analysis of the in-home option to include all federal, State and local funds expended.
- ✓ How much case management is needed and what are the demographic features of the individuals that are most in need of case management.
- ✓ The geographic location of individuals receiving payments under this section.
- ✓ A description of the services purchased with these payments.
- ✓ A description of the income levels of individuals who receive payments under this section and the impact on the Medicaid program.
- ✓ Findings and recommendations as to the feasibility of continuing or expanding the demonstration project.
- ✓ The level and quantity of services (including personal care services) provided to the demonstration project participants compared to the level and quantity of services for residents in adult care homes.

In addition, The Division must incorporate data collection tools designed to compare quality of life among institutionalized versus non-institutionalized individuals, including their perceptions of their own health and well-being, years of healthy life, and activity limitations.

## CONCLUSION

This is an important program with the potential to provide a choice of living arrangements for elderly and disabled adults. We look forward to hearing from county DSSs interested in participating in the SA In-Home Program. An SA In-Home policy manual and case management manual will be issued to counties that participate in the program. Ongoing training and consultation will be available to the participating DSS's.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Jackie Franklin, Special Assistance Program Coordinator, or your Adult Program Representative.

Sincerely,



John T. Tanner, Chief  
Adult & Family Services Section

JTT/jf

cc: Adult Programs Representatives

AFS-08-2003

**RESPONSE TO PROPOSAL  
FOR  
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE (SA) IN-HOME PROGRAM**

*NOTE: Form may be reproduced on your computer.*

\_\_\_\_\_ County Department of Social Services requests to participate in the SA In-Home Program and will follow the policies and procedures developed by the Division of Social Services for the participating counties. As County DSS Director, I \_\_\_\_\_ authorize the agency to participate in the SA In-Home Program.

I designate the following individual as the agency contact for this project:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address, if available: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please respond to each of the following questions.***

1. Why does your agency want to participate in this program?
2. What is the maximum caseload of in-home SA recipients your agency can manage? *In answering this question please consider there are 400 new available slots for the program. They will be distributed equitably among the counties based on the number of counties participating, geographic representation, and agency size.*
3. Who will conduct the assessments using the RAI-HC tool and provide the case management (social worker, nurse, or a social worker/nurse team) to the individuals receiving SA at home? If you don't know a specific person, please state the unit or position to which this project will be assigned.
4. How will you assure that the appropriate Adult Services, SA, and Adult Medicaid staff will work together to implement this program while maintaining current operations for these programs?
5. Does the case management staff that you have designated for this program have basic computer experience and access to a laptop computer and the internet? Describe.
6. Will your staff be able to attend the required training sessions in Raleigh?

Send your responses to: Jackie Franklin, SA Program Coordinator  
Adult & Family Services Section  
NC Division of Social Services  
2405 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-2405

**REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL SLOTS  
FOR COUNTY DSS PARTICIPATING IN THE  
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE (SA) IN-HOME PROGRAM**

*NOTE: Form may be reproduced on your computer.*

\_\_\_\_\_ County Department of Social Services request \_\_\_\_\_ slots in the SA In-Home Program in addition to the \_\_\_\_\_ slots already allocated to this county and will follow the policies and procedures developed by the Division of Social Services for the participating counties. As County DSS Director, I \_\_\_\_\_ authorize the agency to increase the number of slots available and continue participation in the SA In-Home Program.

I designate the following individual as the agency contact for this project:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address, if available: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please respond to each of the following questions.***

1. Why is your agency requesting additional slots?
2. What is the maximum caseload of in-home SA recipients your agency can manage? *In answering this question please consider there are 400 new available slots for the program. They will be distributed equitably among the counties based on the number of new counties requesting to participate, geographic representation, and agency size.*
3. Will the same staff continue conducting the assessments using the RAI-HC tool and provide the case management to the increased number of recipients, or will additional staff be assigned? If you are adding staff, who will that be? Will they have basic computer experience and access to a laptop computer and the internet? (If you don't know a specific person, please state the unit or position to which this project will be assigned.)
4. Will your staff be able to attend the required training sessions in Raleigh?

Send your responses to: Jackie Franklin, SA Program Coordinator  
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