

THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES  
ADULT SERVICES

PROCEDURE A.S. 00.424

SUBJECT:

APPLICABLE TO:

EFFECTIVE DATE:

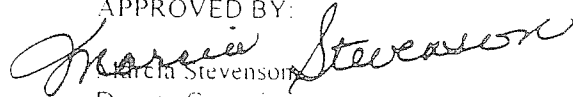
Triage and Referral Shelter  
Procedure

DHS-Operated and Contracted Adult Shelter  
Facilities

April 3, 2000

ADMINISTERED BY:

APPROVED BY:

  
Marcia Stevenson  
Deputy Commissioner

DHS DIVISION OF ADULT SERVICES

### INTRODUCTION

This document sets forth policy for providing services to applicants at the Department of Homeless Services' Triage and Referral Shelters (formerly known as the Assessment Shelters). This procedure applies to all directly operated and contracted Adult Services Triage and Referral Shelter staff (formerly known as Assessment Shelter staff), as well as Program Administrators, Shelter Directors, and the Directors of Social Service. This document will serve as an operations procedural guide for service provision at the Triage and Referral Shelters. It has been designed to assist all staff in our common commitment to strengthening service delivery and to provide a practical working guide that can be used as a reference and training instrument.

The Triage and Referral Shelters are aptly named. Applicants assigned to this program will be "triaged" based on client/caseworker meetings (minimum of 4) using evaluative tools, namely the revised Applicant Interview Document, a medical examination, and a mental health interview. Applicants will then be "referred" or officially assigned to the most appropriate facility/shelter based upon their presenting issues and needs. The maximum length of stay for the Triage and Referral Shelter applicant is up to 21 consecutive days. HRA Diversion Services will also be offered to assist Triage & Referral applicants at the Riverview Center. This specially designated and trained diversion staff will work to divert applicants from the shelter system by offering them a range of alternatives such as special needs allowances to which applicants may be entitled, referral to legal assistance, referral to apartment locating services, and mediation with family members and friends who might be able to accommodate them.

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### RELATED PROCEDURES

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| 99-410     | Adult Shelter Rights, Rules and Responsibilities          |
| 99-420     | Screening and Shelter Referral                            |
| 00-423     | Shelter Applicants and Clients Public Assistance Benefits |

### FORMS

|         |                                       |
|---------|---------------------------------------|
| 402B/bb | Notice of Referral / Spanish          |
| W601U   | SCIMS Data Entry Form                 |
| W604P   | Shelter Case Tracking Form: Screening |
| W604E   | Clothing Referral                     |
| 408A/aa | Curfew Violation Referral/Spanish     |
| 423b    | Referral to Riverview Center          |

**NOTE:** DHS screening policy differentiates between new clients and returnees to the Adult Services shelter system as follows:

- ✓ NEW APPLICANTS (those not previously registered in SCIMS) are automatically eligible for Triage & Referral shelter services.
- ✓ RETURNEES (clients known to SCIMS) absent from shelter system for less than six months are referred to their official shelters and are not eligible for Triage & Referral services.
- ✓ RETURNEE APPLICANTS (clients known to SCIMS) absent from shelter system for more than six months are again eligible for Triage & Referral services.

**\*\*Men's System:** All assignments to the Triage and Referral Shelters will come from Intake and Vacancy Control only. Only NEW APPLICANTS or RETURNEE APPLICANTS will be referred to Triage and Referral and only if a vacancy exists on site. Like all shelters, the Triage and Referral Shelters will abide by the Official Shelter (six months) procedures. Returnees only return to their authorized Triage and Referral Shelter to request a bed.

**Women's System:** All assignments to the Triage and Referral Shelters will be handled directly by each of the three women's intake and assessment facilities.

## MODEL INSTRUCTIONS

### FRONT DOOR:

-SECURITY / ENTRANCE STAFF greet all entrants and conduct the appropriate security checks for all persons each time he/she enters the facility. Entrance Staff will direct clients, who are not listed on the latest shelter roster, to the Screening Worker. Under no circumstances turn away a client until screening is completed and a referral is made.

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-SECURITY / ENTRANCE STAFF / SCREENING WORKER notifies supervisor at once of any problem situation. Supervisors, for example, can counsel clients in crisis, mediate disputes between clients and staff, obtain interpretation assistance for clients with limited English speaking ability and intercede with appropriate action for SCIMS clients with alert codes.

•EMERGENCIES [e.g. client injured, acutely ill, threat to self or others] - Supervisor takes charge to bring immediate danger under control, as follows: Alerts shelter security. Calls 911, if necessary, for police, fire or EMS assistance. See Criteria for Reporting Incidents, Procedure 97-001.

### SCREENING:

-Refer to Screening and Shelter Referral Procedure (99-420)

-Obtain identifying information to conduct the appropriate SCIMS checks.

-If applicant has currently been authorized Code 1 by Intake and Vacancy Control to this Triage and Referral Shelter staff will direct the applicant into the facility to the Waiting Area for further processing.

-If the applicant is currently authorized Code 1 in another shelter facility (a RETURNEE), the screening worker will complete the appropriate referral form, provide travel directions as necessary and instruct the applicant to return to his/her official shelter.

-If the applicant is found to have no SCIMS history at all or has a SCIMS termination code that is six months old or older, the screening worker will complete the appropriate referral form, provide travel directions as necessary and then instruct the applicant to go to the 30<sup>th</sup> St. Men's Intake facility (male) or to the nearest women's intake facility (female).

-If applicant is found to have an active alert code in SCIMS, the screening worker is to alert the Supervisor for further instruction. An example of an Alert Code includes but is not limited to Code 86 – Suspension of all shelter.

-Logs data onto Shelter Case Tracking Form: Screening W604P

#### WAITING AREA:

Services and assistance will be available or provided to clients who are waiting to complete the admissions process. Staff will be available to further inform, engage and/or provide any crisis intervention services to applicants as needed. Services can include but are not limited to emergency intervention, food, delousing, and change of clothing and diversion.

Applicants will be seen in the order in which they arrive. The Director of Social Services will receive Turn Around Documents from Intake and make appropriate bed and case assignments; applicant will be given the name of their caseworker. Again to reiterate, Intake and Vacancy Control will not send any applicant to a Triage and Referral Shelter unless there is a confirmed vacancy for the applicant. There will be no waiting for a bed vacancy at Triage and Referral Shelters for new applicants. Triage & Referral Returnees may have to wait for a bed to open.

#### CASEWORKER'S ADMISSIONS INTERVIEW

At this meeting the caseworker and applicant engage in a dialogue that covers the Applicant Shelter Rights, Rules and Responsibilities (99-410) (including the applicant's signature) the program expectations, and the mutual obligations of staff and applicants working together. This meeting serves as the applicant's initial orientation to the Triage & Referral environment. Applicants are also given another opportunity to bring any immediate concerns they may have to the caseworker's attention, e.g. next day appointment, lack of medication, etc. At the completion of this interview, applicants are escorted to their bed, and given a tour of the facility. The applicant is provided with a lock/key and assigned a storage unit, and informed about the next mandatory orientation session (Lounge/House Meeting).

Upon admission, caseworker will address the following with all applicants:

- Generate case file.
- Applicant Interview Document: First page completed during initial Triage & Referral interview.
- Applicant Contract reviewed and signed by applicant.
- Release of Information (consent forms) completed and signed by applicant.
- Make appointment for medical examination (to be completed within 5 days of entry).
- Make appointment for mental health interview (to be completed within 5 days of entry).
- Property agreement reviewed and signed by applicant;
- Authorize applicant in SCIMS.

- Issue meal ticket set to expire by the 2<sup>nd</sup> appointment and only to be reissued by their Caseworker (or Supervisor if warranted).
- Issues lock and assign locker.
- Have applicant escorted to bed and given a tour of the facility.
- Schedule applicant for Lounge/House Meeting orientation.
- Initial Case note summary: Include impressions, observations, applicant contacts and Applicant reports, etc.

**NOTE:** Medical examinations and mental health interviews will be done within five days to provide crisis intervention, identify mental illness, determine the appropriate shelter, and to determine if a placement outside of the shelter system should be pursued.

#### **-LOUNGE/HOUSE MEETING**

**Attending the lounge or house meeting orientation** will be mandatory for all clients and conducted at specified times to allow for schedule variances. These meeting activities will also address community living issues.

#### **TRIAGE & REFERRAL PROCESS**

- If the applicant wants Public Assistance (PA), the caseworker will schedule an appointment at Riverview Center (see 00-423). The caseworker will check the master appointment list and give the applicant the next available appointment; they will also fill out a referral form and give it to the applicant. The caseworker will receive a PA application status report from the Riverview Center staff to follow applicant's progress through the process. Information will also be in SCIMS.
- The applicant will be scheduled for follow-up visits with the caseworker, and is expected to keep these appointments. A minimum of 4 applicant/caseworker meetings during the Triage and Referral stay is expected. Maximum applicant's stay is up to 21 consecutive days. An applicant should be referred/assigned to the most appropriate placement or official program/general shelter with supervisory approval, as soon as the client's needs/issues have been initially identified. A more elaborate evaluation will occur when the applicant becomes a client in their post-Triage and Referral official shelter.
- The caseworker will verify that all appointments and schedules have been kept.
- Supervisory Case reviews will occur during first and second week of applicant's stay in Triage & Referral.
- Supervisors will track an applicant's status for case review by checking SCIMS daily for 7 and 14 day alerts. This will be done to lessen the opportunity for any applicant to exceed the 21 consecutive days' length of stay.
- The caseworker can help the applicant obtain any necessary documentation.
- The caseworker will follow-up to ensure that the medical and mental health evaluations are completed on time and filed promptly in the applicant's case record.
- The caseworker is also responsible for reviewing all of the information in the applicant's case record to determine the most appropriate shelter assignment, out-placement, etc. The Supervisor should be consulted as necessary.

## TRIAGE & REFERRAL ASSIGNMENT

- The end of Triage & Referral results in applicant being out-placed or assigned to a program or general facility. Supervisory approval is required for final placement authorization as set forth in AID.
- The following must be done prior to applicant's placement in a program or facility:
  1. Review file/packet of documentation
    - A. Medical examination
    - B. Mental Health interview
    - C. Needs Assessment – Applicant Interview Document – primary concerns: Psychiatric, substance abuse, medical and employment history
    - D. Identification: Copies of Social Security card, DD214 or Statement of Service, birth certificate, driver's license, NYS ID card, Green Card, Naturalization papers and Benefits cards as available
    - E. Case notes
  2. Notify receiving site, fax completed AID along with all medical and mental health information, and authorize applicant in new shelter
  3. Arrange for van transport if necessary
  4. It is the responsibility of the Director of Social Services to conduct weekly (additional as needed) case reviews to ensure that applicants do not exceed the 21 day limitation.
  5. Each applicant has an exit interview to determine that all appropriate forms have been signed, and to return the meal ticket and lock.