

City of New York
Administration for Children's Services

Policy #2010/05

Subject: Casework Requirements for 'Housing Subsidy Only' Preventive Services Cases

APPROVED BY: John B. Mattingly

Page: 1 of 5

DATE: July 1, 2010

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY
Children's Services Family Support Services,
Quality Assurance, Housing Support and
Services and Central Systems Support: and all
Preventive Services Provider Staff

PURPOSE: Every child and family in Preventive Services deserves an individualized assessment and service plan tailored to the family's particular needs. This includes families in preventive service programs for which housing subsidy is the only remaining service need. This policy describes case practice and planning expectations specific to these families, including regular casework contacts to monitor safety and to support planning for permanent and affordable housing.

SCOPE: This policy applies to Preventive Services provider agency staff; and Children's Services Family Support Services, Quality Assurance, Systems Support Office, and Housing Support and Services. It also applies to families served in General Preventive (GP) Programs (including Long-term PINS and Beacon programs).

For providers of specialized preventive services (including Special Medical, Family Rehabilitation (FRP), Family Treatment/Rehabilitation (FT/R), Intensive Preventive and Aftercare, Enhanced Preventive and Juvenile Justice Initiative programs) the policy calls for case transfers of 'Housing Subsidy Only' cases to a General Preventive (GP) program.

This policy is effective immediately.

For additional information or questions contact Melody Grissom, Deputy Director, Policy and Procedures Unit, at melody.grissom@dfa.state.ny.us or 212-341-2848.

POLICY:

General Policy Guidelines

Families for which housing subsidy is the only remaining family/child service need generally require a reduced level of casework as compared to other preventive service cases. Nonetheless, regular casework contacts and case planning activities are required to monitor children's safety and to help families plan for permanent and affordable housing. To support continuity for families in this situation, it is Children's Services expectation that case planners and supervisors assess the family's ongoing need for a housing subsidy as well as safety and risk factors for a family prior to designating a case as 'Housing Subsidy Only'.

PROMIS will now support a status of 'Housing Subsidy Only' for General Preventive cases. Programs serving such families must designate cases as 'Housing Subsidy Only' in PROMIS, after documenting their assessment of the case (described below). Doing so will enable ACS to track these cases according to the case practice expectations described below. Providers should follow the attached PROMIS guidelines as they convert cases to 'Housing Subsidy Only'.

Specific Practice Expectations

Assessing Housing Subsidy as the Only Remaining Family/Child Service Need

Preventive service providers are responsible for the assessment that a family's case could close were it not for the ongoing need for a housing subsidy, and this assessment must be approved by the Program Director. If a case has a program choice of "Protective," all protective issues must be resolved and the protective program choice must be end dated via Plan Amendment or FASP prior to designating the case 'Housing Subsidy Only.'¹

During and after such an assessment, the following casework requirements apply and are in effective immediately.

Casework Contacts

Case planners are required to conduct one home visit per quarter (every 3 months) for all General Preventive families designated 'Housing Subsidy Only'. Additionally, a home visit is required to take place no more than 30 days prior to the termination of the housing subsidy and/or the preventive service case. The case planner is expected to see every child in the family at least once per quarter.

Due to the reduced level of contacts required on these cases, and to ensure continuity of services, all contacts should be made by the assigned case planner. Contacts made by other agency employees will not be recognized as meeting the above requirements, except that the supervisor may make required contacts in the absence of the assigned case planner.

Ongoing Assessment of Safety and Risk and Family Needs

Case planners working with families in receipt of housing subsidies must continue to monitor safety and risk factors in the household. This must include an assessment of the safety and well-

¹ See Children's Services Guidance #2009/02, *Modification and Maintenance of Program Choice* (6/2/09)

being of each child in the family. There should be ongoing attention to safety issues so that the case can be returned to a full preventive service if need be (including re-establishing protective program choice in CNNX if appropriate). Case planners should advise families of the preventive program staff's ongoing role as a mandated reporter, and also of the fact that if families do not make themselves available for needed casework contacts, the housing subsidy may end prematurely.

In addition, the preventive program case planner should assess the physical condition of the home to ensure there are no obvious health and safety hazards present.² Finally, the preventive program should assess whether the family's circumstances and other needs have changed.

This assessment must also include consideration of whether the "protective" program choice should be restored on cases that previously had a protective program choice. If risk factors exist which require the return of the family to a "full" preventive case, the agency must remove the designation 'Housing Subsidy Only' in PROMIS, and resume casework contacts appropriate to the case type (CWS or ADVPO) and consistent with the requirements for a regular General Preventive case³. A progress note by the supervisor must be completed, describing the reason for the change.

Casework with the Family

After cases are designated as 'Housing Subsidy Only', ongoing casework should focus on helping the family plan for permanent and affordable housing, either by accessing other housing supports or by increasing the family's income so the rent can be managed without the housing subsidy. The agency's efforts in this regard must be documented in the progress notes and FASP, and additional casework contacts (beyond the minimum required, as described above) must be made as needed to support the family in achieving this goal prior to the termination of the preventive housing subsidy.

Family Team Conferences (FTCs)

Preventive providers are not required to hold six month planning conferences during the period of time that a case is designated as 'Housing Subsidy Only'. However, Children's Services will be available to facilitate Elevated Risk Conferences as needed and encourages the use of Services Termination Conferences prior to the termination of the preventive case and/or the housing subsidy.

Assessing Family's Continued Eligibility as 'Housing Subsidy Only' Case

It is the preventive program's responsibility to assess whether the family remains eligible for the subsidy as described in the Children's Services memorandum entitled *Revised Foster Care and Preventive Housing Subsidy Application and Approval Process*, dated 11/18/08. Prior to the submission of each 6-month FASP, case planners are required to conduct a home visit for this purpose. The assessment must be documented in the FASP. Children's Services will soon release further guidance and a form to help determine a family's continued eligibility for housing subsidy.

² Additional guidance concerning the minimum legal, physical and safety requirements of homes where the family is in receipt of ACS housing subsidies is pending release.

³ See Children's Services Memorandum, *Casework Contact Requirements for General Preventive Providers* (3/8/07)

Changes in circumstances that would affect the family's financial eligibility (including but not limited to increased income; addition of a new, income-generating household member; or the foster care placement or movement of one or more children to another household) must be brought to the attention of Children's Services Office of Housing Support and Services immediately when they become known to the provider, not solely at the time of the six month reassessment. If the family no longer needs the housing subsidy, or if the family moves, the preventive provider must immediately notify the Children's Services Office of Housing Support and Services. Eligible families may apply to have the subsidy transferred to a new apartment, through the Office of Housing Support and Services. The ACS Housing Support and Services Unit has set up two mailboxes for agencies to utilize when a change in the family's housing subsidy need to occur or if a provider agency has questions regarding a family's eligibility. For preventive cases the provider agency can access the mailbox at:

acs.sm.housing.preventive@dfa.state.ny.us

Supervision

Cases that have been designated as 'Housing Subsidy Only' should be reviewed and discussed in supervision at least once per month (this includes a review of the current progress notes in addition to case discussion). This discussion should include a review of the steps being taken by the case planner to help prepare the family to maintain stable housing and avoid foster care placement once the housing subsidy ends. A supervisory note should be documented in the case record at least once every three months and should include summaries of the supervisor's guidance and the supervisor's input. More frequent case reviews must occur if and when the case circumstances require additional discussion, especially when those circumstances impact the safety of the children in the home.

Supervisors and/or program directors maintain responsibility for reviewing the FASPs on Housing Subsidy Only cases and maintain responsibility for approving case closing decisions. Providers should follow their agency's case closing procedures when approving the case closing decisions on these cases.

Program Implications

Child Welfare Services Cases

For indicated Child Welfare cases (CWS) cases that "step-down" to the status of 'Housing Subsidy Only', Children's Services' higher standard of home-based contacts articulated in the Commissioner's memorandum of April 7, 2000, *Family Casework Requirements and Safety Assessments for Families with Histories of CPS Indicated Cases Receiving Services from Protective, Preventive and Foster Care Providers* will not apply.

Families Served by Specialized Preventive Service Programs⁴

For reasons of cost-effectiveness, specialized preventive service programs will not have the option to designate a case as 'Housing Subsidy Only'. Children's Services recommends that when families in a specialized preventive program achieve their goals such that housing subsidy

⁴ Including Family Rehabilitation Programs, Family Treatment/Rehabilitation Programs, Intensive Preventive and After Care Programs, Special Medical Programs, Juvenile Justice Initiative, and other specialized preventive models.

is their only remaining service need, their cases should be transferred to a General Preventive program⁵. General Preventive programs should accept these families as “full” cases, and then convert them to the ‘Housing Subsidy Only’ status when families are ready.

If providers have difficulty finding a suitable General Preventive program that can accept a case transfer, they can reach out to the Office of Preventive Technical Assistance at 212-676-7667. The Office of Preventive Technical Assistance will help identify an appropriate program for the family.

Utilization

For purposes of tracking utilization of program slots, ‘Housing Subsidy Only’ cases will count as one half of a case, thereby occupying one half of a program slot. For example, a 60-slot program with 53 full preventive cases and two “Housing Subsidy Only” cases will be considered to have 54 slots filled, thereby 90% utilized.

Length of Service

‘Housing Subsidy Only’ cases will not be counted when tracking length-of-service or determining the percentage of a program’s cases that are open for more than 12 or 18 months for monitoring or program evaluation purposes.

Welfare Management System (WMS)

Case must be coded in WMS as 25 “Mandated Preventive” in order to be eligible for a preventive housing subsidy. In “Housing Subsidy Only” cases, in accordance with state regulations, the case is considered Mandated if the most recent assessment and service plan required by the uniform case record indicates that termination of the housing subsidy would result in the family’s inability to maintain or secure adequate housing.

⁵ See Children’s Services Policy, Transfer of Preventive Services Cases, (5/11/09).



New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS)
Preventive Organization Management Information System (PROMIS)

PROMIS Instructional Housing Subsidy Only Case Documentation Guide



New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS)
Preventive Organization Management Information System (PROMIS)

PROMIS has been enhanced to allow providers to identify cases for which housing subsidy is the only remaining family/child service required in accordance with the June 2010 "Casework Contact Requirements for Housing Subsidy Only Preventive Services Cases Policy". PROMIS will capture three significant changes; 1) case work contact calculation: because of the reduced level of casework contacts for housing subsidy-only cases, these cases will not count towards the calculation of casework contacts 2) utilization: Housing subsidy-only cases will count as half of a program slot 3) the policy allows for only the assigned case planner and their supervisor to make contacts with the family; these are the only provider agency staff members who will be able to enter contacts with the family in PROMIS.

PART 1: Identifying Housing Subsidy Only Cases:

Follow the steps below to identify a case as "Housing Subsidy Only" in PROMIS:

1. Activate the case on the 'Case Details' screen on the Case Tracking tab.

The screenshot shows the 'Case Details' screen in the PROMIS system. The browser title is 'Preventive Organization Management Information System - Microsoft Internet Explorer'. The page header includes 'NYC Administration for Children's Services' and 'Preventive Organization Management Information System'. The 'Case Tracking' tab is active. A box with the number '1' and an arrow points to the 'Subsidy Only' option in the left-hand navigation menu. The main content area displays case information for 'Doe, Jane', including address, phone, and referral information. The 'Subsidy Only' option is highlighted in the left-hand menu.