

APPENDIX A: INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT

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INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT

Department of Human Resources Cooperative Agreement Between The Division of Social Services AND The Division of Services for The Blind

This agreement is established between the Division of Social Services and the Division of Services for the Blind in order to maintain a clear understanding of the relationship between the two agencies in performing their relative responsibilities. Because of the specialized needs of persons who are visually impaired, services provided by the Division of Services for the Blind have been designed to promote independence for the visually impaired and blind individuals of the State of North Carolina.

This agreement consists of three parts: Part I, "Relating to the Social Service Program under the Social Services Block Grant (Title XX, of the Social Security Act), Personnel Practices and General Administration"; Part II, Relating to the Provision of Vocational Rehabilitation Services to Blind and Visually Impaired Citizens of North Carolina"; Part III, "Relating to the Medical/Eye Care Program".

Part I

Within the Department of Human Resources, the Division of Services for the Blind is the division responsible for the administration of that portion of the Social Services Block Grant which relates to the provision of services that are specifically designed to assist the blind and visually impaired. The Division of Social Services is responsible for programs or services that are not designed specifically for blind and visually impaired individuals but which may be made available to them as needed and appropriate.

The following agreement is set forth by the aforementioned parties and supersedes the agreement dated July 1, 1981.

Procedures Relative to the Social Services Block Grant:

1. The Division of Services for the Blind will have the responsibility for development of services for the visually impaired.
2. The Social Services Block Grant Summary defines those services which are provided by the Division of Services for the Blind, directly or through purchase, for the visually impaired in North Carolina. Other services will be made available to visually impaired individuals by county departments of social services in the same manner as they are made available to any persons who are eligible and in need of services, i.e., under the county's Social Services Block Grant or Child Welfare Services Program. The county departments also provide services under other programs which the county, at its option, makes available through 100 percent county funds to all citizens of that county.

3. With regard to Social Services Block Grant-funded services provided by the Division of Social Services and the Division of Services for the Blind, responsibility for intake and case management rests with the local departments of social services. The director of the local department of social services may assign to the social worker for the blind responsibility for intake and/or case management for individuals who are visually impaired. These responsibilities shall include the initial determination and re-determination of eligibility to the extent specified in the definition of intake and case management outlined in current policy. This assignment of responsibility must be made in written form with one copy retained on file at the Department of Social Services and a second copy transmitted to the appropriate regional director of the Division of Services for the Blind. This written documentation of assignment must be made available for review as a part of monitoring or audit by authorized staff of the Department of Human Resources, Division of Social Services, and Division of Services for the Blind.

4. Where the county director makes an assignment of responsibility as described above, the county department of social services has supervisory responsibility of the Division of Services for the Blind social worker with respect to the implementation of policies under the Social Services Block Grant governing basic eligibility and all special eligibility criteria except for that which governs verification and documentation of blindness or visual impairment and special eligibility criteria governing provision of Chore Services for the Blind and Adjustment Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Included in this is the responsibility for assuring that the social worker for the blind has access to and complies with written policies and interpretation of such policies promulgated by the Division of Social Services.

5. An assignment to the social worker for the blind of responsibility for intake and/or case management shall be limited to persons who have or appear at application to be,

- a. Legally blind: Federal definition: Visual acuity of 20/200, best correction, or a 20-degree field limitation; or
- b. Legally blind: State definition: Visual acuity of 20/100 with best correction, with a progressive eye condition or a 30-degree field limitation; or
- c. Persons with best corrected central visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye; or
- d. Persons with one or both of the following conditions:

- (1) The presence of chronic, progressive eye pathology;
- (2) Visual acuity better than 20/70 which nevertheless results in a vocational or functional handicap.

6. In those cases where the Division of Services for the Blind has intake and case management responsibility for a client who is receiving DSS services, Division of Services for the Blind staff would be responsible for providing data in accordance with DSS reporting requirements.

7. The Division of Services for the Blind will promulgate policies and interpretations of policies respecting the determination of blindness or visual impairment as a factor in eligibility, as well as any other special eligibility criteria which might apply to the receipt of Chore Services for the Blind or Adjustment Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped. Additionally, the Division of Services for the Blind is responsible for policies and procedures governing delivery of Chore Services for the Blind and Adjustment Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The Division will provide written manual materials to the county departments of social services on these policies and procedures.

8. Cases for which the social worker for the blind has carried intake and/or case management responsibility will be included in the population from which the sample is drawn for department of social services monitoring, and policy compliance will be monitored in accordance with forms of the Division of Social Services Monitoring System. The county department of social services will assume fiscal responsibility for errors in eligibility determination and re-determination. Compliance with policies respecting determination of blindness or visual impairment as a factor in eligibility and special eligibility

criteria for provision of Chore Services for the Blind and Adjustment Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired will be monitored by Division of Services for the Blind. Fiscal responsibility for errors in application of these policies will be assumed by that Division.

9. The Division of Services for the Blind is responsible for fair hearings and appeals, development and implementation of procedures for disclosure of information, and procedures to protect civil rights in relation to provision of services by that Division. Appeals that arise from the application of eligibility/case management policies promulgated by the Division of Social Services will be heard through the appeals process established by that Division. Appeals taken against the application of policies respecting determination of blindness or visual impairment as a factor in eligibility shall be heard through the appeals process of the Division of Services for the Blind.

10. The Division of Services for the Blind, with the approval of the Department of Human Resources, may select services from the Social Services Block Grant Plan (Pre-Expenditure Report) to be provided by social workers for the blind each year and will implement these services under policies and procedures approved by the Department of Human Resources.

11. Staff of the Division of Services for the Blind will prepare those reports that are required for services rendered to the visually impaired by the social worker for the blind.

12. Each agency has the right and responsibility to enter into third-party agreements. The Division of Services for the Blind is responsible for agreements and contracts to provide Specialized services to the visually impaired.

13. All applicants for Social Services Block Grant-funded services who are experiencing visual problems will be referred by the county department of social services to the social worker for the blind to be provided information about and the offer of special services for the blind and visually impaired. Since the General Statutes of North Carolina (G.S. 111-4 and G.S. 111-7) require registration of blind individuals and visits to ameliorate the condition of blindness, the social worker for the blind is required to contact each referral.

Personnel Practices:

1. Each agency agrees to keep the other agency informed of such changes in policies and procedures, personnel practices, and other phases of the program as are of mutual concern.

2. In employing social workers for the blind, first consideration will be given to visually impaired applicants.

3. The County Department of Social Services will be responsible for the daily supervision of the Social Worker for the Blind including areas such as punctuality, reporting on the Job and eligibility for Social Services Grant-funded Services as set forth previously in this agreement. The Regional Supervisor of Medical and Social Services of the Division of Services for the Blind will make periodic visits to the County Departments of Social Services to assist in specialized professional supervision and overall coordination of Social Services Block Grant funded Services for the Blind. An annual evaluation of the Social Worker for the Blind will be the responsibility of the Regional Supervisor of Medical and Social Services of the Division of Services for the Blind. This will be a Joint effort with the County Director or his designee in which both county and regional supervisor share the responsibility for the evaluation. The recommendations are then to be forwarded to the Regional Director of the Division of Services for the Blind for the state personnel file of the Social Worker for the Blind.

4. In the absence of the social worker for the blind, the county directors of social services or their designee(s) will consult with the regional supervisor for the Division of Services for the Blind for meeting emergency situations for all recipients and applicants for services from the Division of Services for the Blind.

5. The director of the Division of Services for the Blind is the appointing authority for all staff members of the Division of Services for the Blind. Such appointments are made in compliance with the General Statutes 126-16, Equal Employment Opportunity, and G.S. 168-6, Right to Employment. In making such appointments, the county director of social services concerned will be contacted and he/she will be given the opportunity to concur with the appointment. If the county director does not concur, the reason for non-concurrence must be stated. In writing to the regional director of the Division of Services for the Blind. The regional director of the Division of Services for the Blind shall acknowledge in writing the county director's communication of non-concurrence and shall institute negotiations to resolve differences to the extent feasible.

6. The Division of Services for the Blind employees are under the N.C. Personnel System. It is necessary that the established salary schedule and leave policies applicable to all state employees be followed.

General Administration - Division of Services for the Blind/County Responsibilities:

1. Budget materials which require county funding will be developed jointly by the Division of Services for the Blind regional director and the county director of social services prior to submission to the county board of commissioners by the county director. The format for budgeting will be the same as that adopted by the DSS Budget Task Force and which has been accepted by the various Divisions.

2. The Division of Services for the Blind will have the responsibility for all aspects of its fiscal management.

3. It is the responsibility of both agencies to cooperate by referring cases or individuals to the agency which carries the responsibility for the function needed to provide services to the client, a visual impairment being the mayor criterion for referral to the Division of Services for the Blind.

4. The county department of social services will be responsible for providing adequate office space, clerical assistance, and supplies for the Division of Services for the Blind social worker and paraprofessional staff serving that particular county.

5. The regional supervisor of the Division of Services for the Blind will serve as the liaison between the county and the Division of Services for the Blind for all matters that pertain to the administration of the Independent Living Services Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Part II

Relating to the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation Services to Blind and Visually Impaired Citizens of North Carolina under the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-112 as amended by 93-516).

Purpose:

The purpose of Part II of this agreement is to signify the interest and intent of the parties to this agreement in a plan designed to 1) provide vocational rehabilitation services to more blind and visually impaired persons in the State of North Carolina; 2) develop and maintain an effective interagency cooperative pattern of coordinating agency services for the optimum rehabilitation of visually impaired

social services applicants and recipients; and 3) develop service delivery systems which will assure effectiveness and efficiency of services.

Provisions:

A. The Division of Services for the Blind will:

1. Assign rehabilitation counselors from its district offices to serve all counties in the state, thereby providing rehabilitation counselor services to all eligible visually impaired clients.
2. Screen all visually impaired individuals referred for vocational rehabilitation services by the county departments of social services.
3. Make prompt determinations concerning the eligibility of all individuals referred for rehabilitation services.
4. Lend its resources, such as staff training, planning, and program development to this agreement.
5. Maintain an active caseload of persons found to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services by the Division of Services for the Blind.
6. Develop individualized written rehabilitation programs for clients as needed to meet the specific needs of each case. These plans will utilize the talents and abilities of the social workers and the rehabilitation counselors, as well as all other available resources, in providing a coordinated program of services for clients and their families leading to rehabilitation.
7. Provide consultation regarding vocational rehabilitation to departments of social services.
8. Provide all services in accordance with Federal Regulations and the State Plan of the Rehabilitation Program of the Division of Services for the Blind. These services include intensive evaluation to assess personal capacities and determine client potential for employment, counseling and guidance, restorative services, work adjustment, job training, tools and equipment, maintenance, placement, and follow-up services.

B. The North Carolina Division of Social Services will:

1. Through the development of policies and procedures, support this joint program actively throughout the state.
2. Lend its resources, such as staff training, planning, and program development to this agreement.

C. The County Departments of Social Services will:

1. Provide office space for rehabilitation counselors for interviewing clients and referrals.
2. Promptly refer to the Division of Services for the Blind's rehabilitation counselor all applicants and recipients or other persons known to the department who, because of a visual impairment, are experiencing difficulty in functioning. Those to be referred will include applicants for and recipients of Special Assistance for the Blind, State-County special Assistance, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Medical Assistance, Refugee Assistance, and others who are applicants for or recipients of other services offered by the county department.

3. Bring to bear from its own resources, or through arrangement with other agencies, those financial, medical, and social services that will stimulate and support the client's vocational rehabilitation program. Social workers will assist clients in securing and utilizing the appropriate available services as child care, homemaker services, housing, educational services, legal aid, family planning, family counseling, and education for home and financial management.

D. In addition to the foregoing, all parties to this agreement will:

1. Provide for a free and mutual exchange of medical and other case record information that will assist either party in aiding rehabilitation of clients and their families.

2. Cooperate to the fullest extent possible in providing to those clients and their families needed services from both agencies in a coordinated timely manner.

3. In areas of mutual need, jointly develop and carry out in-service training activities, program planning, program development, and evaluation.

Part III

Relating to the Medical/Eye Care Program:

The Division of Services for the Blind is the Division within the Department of Human Resources responsible for administration of the Medical/Eye Care Program. The Division of Social Services is responsible for the certification process for clients of the Medical/Eye Care Program.

The Division of Services for the Blind agrees to:

1. Provide manuals to county departments of social services on all policies and procedures relating to eligibility for the Medical/Eye Care Program.

2. Monitor and evaluate the eligibility determination records on applicants and clients who apply for Medical/Eye Care Services through the county departments of social services.

3. Establish initial and continuing eligibility standards and verification of income procedures in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act for the Medical/Eye Care Program.

4. Provide to appropriate staff at the county departments of social services initial and on-going training related to certification for the Medical/Eye Care Program.

5. Provide all forms necessary in the certification process.

6. Provide current updates to the county departments of social services of changes in policies and procedures and other phases of the Medical/Eye Care Program as related to the certification process.

7. Provide consultation regarding the Medical/Eye Care Program to county departments of social services.

The Division of Social Services agrees that the county departments of social services should:

1. Obtain from each applicant for Medical/Eye Care Program the necessary information as required by the Division of Services for the Blind to verify income.
2. Determine initial and continuing eligibility of applicants and recipients of Medical/Eye Care Services based on policies and procedures issued by the Division of Services for the Blind.
3. Explain to each recipient the freedom of choice statute and their right to choose the provider of their choice.
4. Issue Certification of Need to all applicants who qualify for the Medical/Eye Care Program under the appropriate eligibility criteria.
5. Maintain written copies of all applications for Medical/Eye Care Services for a minimum of three years.
6. Make available upon request to the Division of Services for the Blind staff all certification records of applicants and clients of the Medical/Eye Care Program.
7. Furnish to the staff of the Division of Services for the Blind eye clinics a list of clients who wish to receive services in the clinics.

This agreement is entered into between the Division of Services for the Blind and the Division of Social Services on Oct. 16th, day of 1984. Each Division agrees to assist in the resolution of any questions which arise in the delivery of services.

Herman Gruber; Director, Division of Services for the Blind
Date: 10-16-84

John Syria; Director, Division of Social Services
Date: 10-16-84