

Bulletin

August 3, 2007

Minnesota Department of Human Services □ P.O. Box 64941 □ St. Paul, MN 55164-0941

OF INTEREST TO

- County Directors
- Social Services Supervisors and Staff
- County Supervisors
- County Financial Workers
- County Case Managers
- Tribal Representatives
- Public Health Agencies
- Intensive Residential Treatment Services

ACTION/DUE DATE

Read and implement.
January 1, 2007.

EXPIRATION DATE

August 3, 2009

Revised MSA provision supports Options Initiative with extra allowance for Shelter-needy clients with special needs

TOPIC

The Options Initiative was designed to increase access to community supports and to strengthen the capacity of local communities to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and special health care needs. This bulletin outlines procedures for the Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA) Shelter-needy special need allowance.

PURPOSE

Inform and instruct county agencies about the Minnesota Supplemental Aid special need provision allowing individuals under 65 years of age who are relocating into the community from an institution or mental health rehabilitative treatment program to receive an additional shelter-needy allowance in order to access housing.

CONTACT

For questions on program policy:
Local Agency Support Policy Center
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SIGNED

CHARLES E. JOHNSON
Assistant Commissioner
Children and Family Services

I. BACKGROUND

Minnesota has a strong commitment to providing home and community-based support options for people with disabilities and special health care needs. Our state's experience over the past two decades demonstrates that most individuals currently institutionalized can be appropriately served in home and community based settings. Additionally, the 1999 United States Supreme Court "Olmstead" decision affirmed that states have an obligation to ensure that people with disabilities are not forced to move to or remain in segregated or institutional settings.

This bulletin is designed to:

- Introduce program and administrative changes that will result in increased access to community services and supports for Minnesotans with disabilities and special health care needs; and
- Strengthen the capacity of Minnesota's communities to respond to their needs.

The 2001 Minnesota Legislature passed legislation that allows for an additional Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA) special need allowance for disabled individuals who are under the age of 65, otherwise eligible for MSA, relocating into the community from an institution, do not have housing, and are determined to be shelter-needy. This provision was amended in 2005 to include persons relocating from Intensive Residential Treatment mental health rehabilitative programs.

II. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of the MSA shelter-needy provision, use the following definitions:

Gross Monthly Income: The total amount of earned and unearned income received in a month before any deductions or disregards are applied.

Institution: A hospital, consistent with Code of Federal Regulations, title 42, section 440.10; regional treatment center inpatient services, consistent with Minnesota Statutes section 245.474; a nursing facility; ~~or~~ an intermediate care facility for persons with mental retardation or related condition, or an adult mental health residential treatment program (Intensive Residential Treatment) under Minnesota Statutes section 256B.0622, and who are shelter needy.

MSA Shelter-needy Special Need Allowance: An additional special need allowance to be added to an MSA client's standard that equals the federal Food Stamp Program maximum allotment for a single individual that was in effect on January first of the previous calendar year (currently \$152).

Shelter Costs: May include rent; mobile home lot rentals; monthly principal, interest, insurance premiums, and property taxes due for mortgages or abstract for deed costs, costs for utilities, including heating, cooling, electricity, water and sewer, garbage removal fees; and the basic service fee for one telephone.

Shelter-needy: Total shelter costs exceed 40% of the assistance unit's gross income before the application of the special need standard.

III. WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for the shelter-needy special need allowance, applicants for the shelter-needy allowance must be:

- eligible for MSA;
- under age 65;
- relocating to the community from an institution or mental health program as defined above; and
- determined by the county to be shelter-needy.

Applicants must be residing in an institution or mental health rehabilitative treatment program and relocating to the community to qualify for the shelter needy special need.

Applicants relocating from an institution into the community are considered at risk of placement into a group residential housing (GRH) facility. Apply the individual MSA standard when determining the amount of the MSA grant.

Participants under the age of 65 who are receiving the shelter-needy allowance and turn age 65 continue to receive the shelter-needy special need until subsidized housing becomes available.

IV. COUNTY IMPLEMENTATION

A. Service Coordinator Responsibilities

Individuals relocating into the community more than likely will need assistance from a relocation service coordinator (RSC), case manager, authorized representative, friend, or family member to initiate and coordinate the initial move. The individual may need help with the following services:

- applying for MSA;
- securing housing;
- securing utility services;
- applying for funding (Emergency General Assistance, Emergency MSA, and other sources) to pay initial housing expenses, such as
 - rental application fee;
 - first month's rent;
 - damage deposit; and
 - utility (gas, electric, one telephone, etc.) installation fees.

After the individual has moved to the community, the RSC or financial worker must monitor the case to ensure that the client remains eligible for the shelter-needy allowance.

The individuals must also fill out and sign a form (see attached) that states they have applied for subsidized housing and will report any financial status changes to the financial worker, i.e. accepting a housing subsidy.

B. Financial Worker Responsibilities

The client, service coordinator, case manager, or other authorized representative must notify the individual's financial worker that the client is planning to relocate into the community, and subsequently, that the individual has moved into the community. Financial workers must continue taking applications for MSA in the usual manner, including pending the MSA application if the individual is still in an institution.

For MSA clients receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), financial workers continue to budget the client's federal benefit rate (FBR), applying the individual, living alone MSA standard. SSI clients will receive an increase to the full individual FBR after discharge from the institution.

If an individual is ineligible for SSI due to excess income, but would be eligible for SSI upon discharge, financial workers should refer the individual (service coordinator or authorized representative) to the local Social Security Administration to apply for SSI.

For individuals in an institution and not receiving MSA due to excess income, financial workers must use the actual income for budgeting, including any applicable disregards.

Financial workers must verify that individuals receiving the shelter-needy special need are applying or have applied for subsidized housing. Verification should take place initially, when the shelter-needy special need is first determined, and again at each recertification. Refer to the attached form for verification of application for subsidized housing. Clients who refuse to apply for subsidized housing are ineligible for the shelter-needy special need.

Once the individual has been approved for and is receiving subsidized housing, the individual must notify the financial worker. The financial worker, in turn, recalculates the MSA budget, no longer including the shelter-needy special need.

Example I

Jim is a 54 year old individual with a serious and persistent mental illness who is residing at a nursing facility in Hennepin County. He has informed his case manager that he would like to live in an apartment. Jim is currently receiving SSI (\$30) and MSA (\$49).

The case manager takes on the role of Relocation Service Coordinator (RSC) and continues to meet with Jim, who states he would like to live in South Minneapolis near Vail Place. With assistance from his RSC, Jim locates an available apartment, and the landlord agrees to rent an efficiency apartment to Jim for \$520 per month, including utilities.

The RSC informs the financial worker in Hennepin County that Jim will be relocating to an unsubsidized apartment where housing expenses will total more than 40% of his gross income. The financial worker case notes this information.

Jim applies for Emergency Minnesota Supplemental Aid (EMSA), to cover the damage deposit, and installation of electricity and one telephone line.

Once Jim is discharged from the nursing facility, the financial worker recalculates Jim's budget to reflect his new community status. The financial worker increases the MSA grant to \$233 (\$81 and an additional \$152 for the shelter-needy provision). The financial worker contacts Jim to notify him of his \$233 grant amount and that he must sign a form indicating that he will apply for subsidized housing.

The RSC assists Jim in applying for subsidized housing and Jim notifies the financial worker of any financial status change.

A year later, Jim notifies the financial worker that he has been approved for and is receiving subsidized housing. The financial worker again recalculates Jim's budget, eliminating the shelter-needy amount from the budget, issuing \$81 for his MSA grant.

Example II

Barb is a 25 year old individual who has resided in a nursing facility for 6 months. She has a brain injury as a result of a motorcycle accident. Medical assistance pays for her cost of care at the facility. Barb and her interdisciplinary team decide that she can live in an apartment if appropriate supports are available to her. She requires a setting that is wheelchair accessible.

Barb's RSC assists her with locating an accessible apartment in an area of the city that Barb has specified. Rent will be \$620 per month for a one bedroom, non-subsidized apartment.

The RSC contacts Barb's financial worker and completes paperwork to request emergency assistance for Barb's initial housing expenses, Medicaid waiver services, and subsidized housing. The RSC also applies for subsidized housing for Barb.

The financial worker calculates Barb's budget after she moves into her apartment. Barb has been approved for a Medicaid waiver, receives a full Federal Benefit Rate from SSI and is eligible for the MSA grant of \$233 (\$81 and the shelter-needy special need of \$152).

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V. MAXIS INSTRUCTIONS

The shelter-needy standard increase will not be automated on MAXIS. Workers must enter the \$152 shelter-needy amount on the STAT/PDED panel in the "Other Expense" field. This amount must be adjusted January first of each year according to the Food Stamp program allotment for a single individual that was in effect on January 1 of the previous year.

In MSA Fiat, increase the need standard by \$152 (shelter-needy amount). This will increase the grant by \$152. For example, for an SSI \$623 person, the need standard would be \$836, thus increasing the MSA grant from \$81 to \$233.

The shelter-needy increased standard must also be documented in CASE/NOTE.

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11/15/06 07:32:10                                MAXIS                                FMCGOAM5
                                           Program Deductions (PDED)                                0 Of 0

Ref Last  First  M * Ref Nbr: 01  Client, Sue
01 Client, Sue  I * * * * * Health Care Programs Only * * * * *
*               _ Pickle Disregard: _
*               Disa Widow/ers Deduction (Y/N): _
*               Disa Adult Child Disregard (Y/N): _
*               Widow/ers Disregard (Y/N): _
* _ Other Unearned Income Deduction: $ _____
* _ Other Earned Income Deduction: $ _____
*
* * * * * MSA, GRH And Health Care Programs * * * * *
* _ Blind/Disa Student Child Disregard (Y/N): _ _ PASS
* Guardianship Fee: $ _____ Rep Payee Fee: $ _____
*
* * * * * MSA, GRH Only * * * * *
* Excess Need: $ _____ Other Expense: $ 152.00_
* Restaurant Meals (Y/N): _

Mode: D Function: STAT Case Nbr: _414292 Month: 11 06 Command: _ _ _
Sv: 90 PW: PWLXN35 SW: Updated: User: PWNXC35
Enter-PF1---PF2---PF3---PF4---PF5---P6---PF7---PF8---PF9---PF10---PF11---PF12---
HELP PMI EXIT CNOTE PNOTE PREV NEXT EDIT OOPS TRBL INFO

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11/15/06 11:59:17                                MAXIS                                FMENEAM1
Version: 1 Of 1                                MSA FIAT Results                                Process Date: 11/15/06
                                           Case Budget Summary (MSCB)

Date of Last Approval                                Responsible County                                90
Current Program Status... ACTIVE                    Servicing County..... 90
Eligibility Result..... ELIG                        Total Resources.....$ _____
Reporting Status..... NON-HRF_____                Maximum Resources.....$ 2000.00
Source Of Information.... FIAT                       Need Standard.....$ 836.00
Benefit..... INCREASE                                Net Income.....$ 603.00
Recertification Date..... 07 01 01                    Budget Deficit.....$ 233.00
Basis Of Eligibility..... AGED                        Amount Already Issued....$
Vendor Reason: _                                       Recoupment.....$
                                           Current Payment.....$ 233.00

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VI. Special Needs

This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by contacting us at 651-431-3809, or through the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 (TDD), 7-1-1 or 1-877-627-3848 (speech to speech relay service).