

CHAPTER 2-000 APPLICATION PROCESS

2-000 Requests: Any person may contact the local office by telephone, in writing, by fax, by electronic transmission, or in person to obtain information about child care, explore eligibility, or make arrangements to apply for services for himself/herself or as a representative of another person.

2-001 Response to Requests: Staff accept requests at the local office or at other places in the community. Each local office establishes a method of recording requests. A completed application is documentation of a request.

2-002 Request Time Limits: Staff must take action to secure an application as soon as possible. If the client does not keep appointments or cannot be contacted within 30 days of the request, the worker must document the circumstances and reject the application.

2-003 Application

2-003.01 Right to Apply: Any person residing in Nebraska has the right to apply for child care.

If the applicant or representative requests assistance, the worker must assist in completing the application for services.

2-003.02 Interview: An interview is required to apply for child care services only but a face-to-face interview is not required; a telephone contact may serve as the interview and the worker may mail the application form for the client to complete or inform the client of the electronic application.

The applicant must provide to the Department the information requested on the Application for Assistance found in the Public Assistance Forms Manual and incorporated into these regulations.

2-003.02A Prudent Person Principle: When the statements of the client are incomplete, unclear, or inconsistent, or when other circumstances in the particular case indicate to a prudent person that further inquiry must be made, the worker must obtain additional verification before eligibility is determined. The client has primary responsibility for providing verification of information relating to eligibility. Verification may be supplied in person, through the mail, or from another source (as an employer). If it would be extremely difficult or impossible for the client to furnish verification in a timely manner, the worker must offer assistance.

2-003.03 Time Limit for Action on Application: The Department must act with reasonable promptness on all applications for assistance. The Department must make a determination of eligibility on an application within 30 days from the date of application. If circumstances beyond the control of the Department prevent an eligibility determination within 30 days, the Department must record the reason for the delay in the case record and deny the application. The Department must send a Notice of Action informing the applicant of the reason for the denial and advise the client the application is valid for an additional 30 day period. If the client appears eligible at the time of application, the Department authorizes child care.

2-003.03A Additional 30 day period: A new application is not required in the additional 30 day period. The date all eligibility factors are met is the date services are authorized. If, at the end of the additional 30 day period, eligibility is unable to be determined due to fault of the client, a new application is required.

2-003.04 Eligibility Redetermination

2-003.04A Change in Status: The worker completes a redetermination of eligibility when information is obtained about a change in a client's circumstances that may affect his/her eligibility. The worker must complete this review as soon as possible within a 30-day time limit.

2-003.04B Periodic Redetermination: The Department must periodically review and document a client's need for child care and may coordinate this redetermination with its review of a client's eligibility for other benefit types. The Department must conduct a periodic redetermination at least once every 18 months, but not more than once every 12 months. When conducting a periodic redetermination, the Department must:

1. Conduct a redetermination of each client's eligibility;
2. Determine if the client continues to meet one of the criteria at 392 NAC 3-000;
3. Instruct each client to complete and sign a new Application for Assistance reflecting his/her current situation; and
4. Complete necessary redetermination forms and provider authorization.

2-003.04C Child Protective Services Investigation: No Application for Assistance is required for a child protective services investigation when a child abuse/neglect report has been filed or when there is a court order and the only service provided is foster care or child protective service.

2-004 Case Record Maintenance

2-004.01 File Contents: Service case records must include appropriate forms for and documentation of:

1. The request for services or the application;
2. Income verification; and
3. Service eligibility.

2-004.02 Record Retention: Each office must retain the required documentation for four years from the eligibility period ending date.

2-005 Summary of Forms: For a list of the forms used in Child Care Assistance, see 392-000-401. Instructions for the forms are contained in the Public Assistance Forms Manual.