



September 5, 2019

To: Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Family Violence Program Contractors

From: HHSC Family Violence Program (FVP)

Subject: Important FY2020 Information on Counting HHSC Telephone Services

Purpose

The purpose of this letter is to provide guidance regarding the accepted use of the telephone for HHSC approved services. This amended policy is effective September 1, 2019.

The HHSC Family Violence Program is extending the use of the telephone as a service channel for certain HHSC services. The telephone is only approved for these services when used to directly serve an established client who has had an intake completed within the past 12 months or has continued to receive services over the past 12 months. A telephone service does not include calls made on behalf of the client, appointment reminder calls, or hotline calls where the caller is not a client receiving services. Several specific examples of allowable and unallowable telephone services are listed in Appendix A.

HHSC will allow the use of a telephone to provide services under the following circumstances:

- **Legal Assistance:** This service should be reported when providing a client with legal assistance including; identifying individual legal needs, legal rights and options, and providing support and accompaniment (including court accompaniments) in their pursuit of those options. Accepted funding sources for this service include: HHSC Shelter, HHSC Shelter A, HHSC Non-Residential, HHSC Satellite and HHSC SNRP (if included in SNRP proposal).
- **Information and Referral-Community Services:** This service should be reported when providing a client with information and referrals about existing community resources, including but not limited to the following: medical care, legal assistance providers, protective and regulatory services, resource assistance, public assistance, counseling and treatment services, children's services, and any other appropriate family violence services. Accepted funding sources for this service include: HHSC Shelter, HHSC Shelter A,

HHSC Non-Residential, HHSC Satellite and HHSC SNRP (if included in SNRP proposal).

- **Information and Referral-Employment:** This service should be reported when providing a client with information and referrals about employment training and employment opportunities, either directly or through formal arrangements with other agencies. Accepted funding sources for this service include: HHSC Shelter, HHSC Shelter A, HHSC Non-Residential, HHSC Satellite and HHSC SNRP (if included in SNRP proposal).
- **Family Violence Option:** This service should be reported when providing a client with a Family Violence Option (Good Cause) form or a Family Violence Exemption. Please refer to the Family Violence Option policy guidance for more information on how to report clients who only receive this service. Accepted funding sources for this service include: HHSC Shelter, HHSC Shelter A, HHSC Non-Residential, HHSC Satellite and HHSC Special Non-Residential Project (SNRP) for those organizations who only have a SNRP contract with HHSC and do not have an HHSC Shelter or HHSC Non-Residential contract.
- **Intervention Services:** This service should be reported when providing a client (including children) intervention services such as; safety planning, understanding and support, advocacy, case management, and dating violence services. Accepted funding sources for this service include: HHSC Shelter, HHSC Shelter A, HHSC Non-Residential, HHSC Satellite and HHSC SNRP (if included in SNRP proposal).
- **Counseling:** This service should be reported over the telephone only when providing an adult client one-on-one support delivered by a trained staff or volunteer. Counseling over the phone with children will not be counted. Accepted funding sources for this service include: HHSC Shelter, HHSC Shelter A, HHSC Non-Residential, HHSC Satellite and HHSC SNRP (if included in SNRP proposal).
- **Orientation:** This service should be reported one-time per client when providing introductions to the organization by a trained staff. Accepted funding sources for this service include: HHSC Shelter, HHSC Shelter A, HHSC Non-Residential, HHSC Satellite, and HHSC SNRP. In rare instances, an orientation service may be provided over the phone, if the survivor identifies at least one of the barriers outlined below:
 - survivor self-identified disability;
 - significant geographic distance to the closest access point to services;
 - other significant transportation challenges as identified by the survivor;

- survivor does not have access to technology that would allow for a face-to-face technology service;
 - for other challenges identified by the survivor, please contact your HHSC contract manager.
- Providing an orientation/intake service over the phone should be considered a last resort option. When a survivor is unable to travel to the center to conduct an intake, other options should be considered such as:
 - meeting at a safe location identified by the survivor;
 - utilizing Skype, Facetime or other face-to-face technology tools;
 - providing the survivor with transportation to the center; or
 - other innovative mobile advocacy efforts as approved by your HHSC Contract Manager.
- When employing any of these methods for intake, including telephone, the center must have policies for providing all the required intake information and documentation as required by Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 379, including a process for obtaining required signatures on intake documents.

Appendix A has several examples of allowable and unallowable telephone services.

Please contact me or your contract manager if you have any questions or need further clarification.

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APPENDIX A

The following list illustrates examples of allowable and unallowable telephone services. If you have questions about specific examples, please contact your HHSC family violence program contract manager.

Legal Assistance

Allowable Examples: A case manager/advocate or legal advocate calls an established client to provide Crime Victims Compensation information or assistance with the application.

Unallowable Examples: A legal advocate calls a client to remind them of an upcoming court date.

An established client with a child support case calls the family violence center and a legal advocate/attorney provides legal advice. **This is unallowable because providing legal advice/representation is not an approved service under HHSC Family Violence Program shelter, nonresidential, or special nonresidential project contracts.**

Information and Referral-Community Services

Allowable Examples: A former shelter client calls her case manager/advocate to request information about low-cost child care facilities in the community.

Unallowable Example: Someone calls the hotline to request information about a community resource. It is unknown if this person was previously a client receiving family violence services from the center. **This is unallowable as a service but could be counted as a type of Hotline Call.**

Information and Referral-Employment

Allowable Examples: A case manager/advocate calls a client to give them the address and phone number for the local workforce development office.

Unallowable Example: A case manager/advocate receives a call from a potential employer to provide a reference for a shelter resident.

Intervention Services

Allowable Examples: A non-residential client calls her case manager to discuss safety planning.

A former residential client, who received services within the current fiscal year, but is no longer residing at the shelter calls her prior case manager to discuss safety planning with her and her teenage daughter.

Unallowable Examples: A hotline caller who has never received services calls to request resources and help safety planning.

A case manager calls a client to do a brief check-in or calls to let the client know that resources are ready for pick-up.

Counseling Services

Allowable Example: An adult client who received in-person counseling services gets a job and can no longer come in for services. The client makes arrangements to receive counseling services over-the-phone.

Unallowable Examples: A counselor calls a child who used to come in for counseling to do a session over-the-phone.

A counselor provides counseling services over the phone to a client who has not conducted an intake for the current fiscal year and is not a continuing client from the previous fiscal year.

A counselor calls the survivor to remind them of an upcoming appointment.

Orientation Services

Allowable Example: An adult with a disability is in need of counseling services but is physically unable to come into the center for services. The case manager conducts an intake over the phone for this potential client.

Unallowable Example: A hotline caller wants to receive intervention services over the phone but is unwilling to come into the center for an orientation, despite having access to transportation.