

DeKalb County Community Action Department
Policies and Procedures Manual (updated 11/4/15)



1. Morning Routine-DeKalb County Community Action (DCCA) opens its doors at 8:00am M-F. Employees who begin at 8:00 are expected to have the office open and ready for business by 8:00am. This includes turning on overhead lights and all lamps, logging on the client workstation computers, turning on the radio, making sure the water pitcher is filled, making coffee (optional), and turning the sign around to say we're open.
2. Evening Routine-DCCA closes its doors at 4:30pm. Usually the Office Coordinator will make sure the office is closed up properly. In the event the Office Coordinator is out of the office, an employee available should turn off overhead lights and all lamps, restart the client workstation computers, turn off the radio, turn off the coffee maker, turning the sign to say we're closed until 8:00 the next day (or a different time if necessary), and make sure the office door is locked and closed, and the Director's office door is closed. On certain days the office is closed, a sign will be up to illustrate this. This sign will take place of the clock sign.
3. File Drawers and Cabinets-Program Participant files and pertinent program files are kept in the locked file drawers in the Office Coordinator office. These file drawers and cabinets must be locked during times the office is closed. The keys to the file drawers are located in the Office coordinator office in the center desk drawer. The file drawer keys are marked A, B, and C. Make sure the file drawers and cabinets are locked before the office is closed for the day. The key to the cabinet is located on a magnetized key ring under the Office coordinator center desk drawer.
4. Scheduling Appointments-There are two ways people will contact us who are seeking services; by phone and walk-ins. All people should be scheduled an appointment for an assessment unless there is an appropriate amount of time available at the time of walk-in. People seeking services should be told what our services are and the purpose of them. Family Support Specialists should also engage the person in a discussion regarding their situation. The individual should have a good understanding of the purpose and goals of our services before they come in. There will be many people who call specifically for financial assistance for rent, deposit, utilities, etc. **You may want to say something like, "Our services are comprehensive and focus on helping households to achieve long term stability and success. We schedule initial appointments to determine eligibility as a DCCA client and to assess the needs of a household and the best way to address those needs by working with a Family Support Specialist."** People are to be scheduled with a Family Support Specialist as soon as possible. Family Support Specialists schedule their own appointments. People should be scheduled in the Community Action Outlook calendar with name, phone number (or other contact

information such as an e-mail address), a brief description of what their household situation is, and who they will be meeting with. If a person has received services in the past, they should be seen by the same Family Support Specialist to maintain consistency. If the person seeking services is new, they should meet with the Family Support Specialist who initially spoke with them, especially if an in depth dialogue has already begun. Each employee has a color code for the scheduling calendar.

Appointments should be scheduled for the least amount of time possible to complete an assessment and STARS input so we can schedule as many people as possible. Family Support Specialists should be scheduled with at least four appointments per day. A phone call should be made to the person a day before to verify the appointment.

5. Phone Calls/Log-All business phone calls need to be logged onto the Phone Log sheet.
6. Inboxes-Each employee will have their own inbox that will be placed in the Office coordinator office. All correspondence among employees will be placed in the appropriate inbox.
7. Initial Client Appointment Process-When people come in for their scheduled appointment, ask them to wait in the client area until the Family Support Specialist is ready to see them. Begin the appointment by welcoming the person and thanking them for coming in and letting them know that we look forward to working with them. Engage in rapport building to give the person a sense of comfort and ease. Explain to them again what the goals and expectations of our program are and ask them what their goals and expectations are. Have an assessment file ready. During the appointment, glean all the necessary information to fill out the assessment forms. Make copies of necessary information brought in by the individuals. It is essential all information is obtained and put on the forms during the appointment time. If the person does not bring in all information necessary make sure they know to bring the missing information at their next appointment.
8. Ongoing Support- As a component of our CSBG funding we are responsible for showing the impact of our services to the households we serve. As such, this is an essential aspect of DCCA services. All families seen are given at least I&R. FSS and FED (if appropriate) services will be given once the household is determined eligible going forward. It is our mission to have regular contact with Program Participants to support their efforts to increase household stability and to assist them in addressing barriers along the way.
9. Surveys- All households coming in for an initial assessment appointment need to complete an initial client survey (if they are yet deemed eligible for services going forward or not). All Program Participants working with a Family Support Specialist need to complete a program participant survey once per month. The surveys are web based and located on our two computers in the client work area. Program Participants may be e-mailed the survey link to be completed at home.
10. Walk-Ins-We will make every effort to accommodate walk-ins, however due to scheduling and the availability of an employee's time it is best to schedule an appointment. Try to give as much information to the person walking in as necessary without being bogged down by time.

11. Program Participant Files-All Program Participant files will be held in the file drawers in the Office coordinator office. They will be filed alphabetically. The "Open" file drawer is for those files that need to be updated but the Family Support Specialist didn't have time to do so before leaving for the day. Files should not be stored in any office other than the file drawers in the Office Coordinator office.
12. Outreach Sites-There are two outreach sites, one each in Genoa and Somonauk. A laptop computer, scanner, and USB stick need to be brought to the outreach sites. The laptops are located in the Office Coordinator office.
13. Meetings and Trainings-Every so often staff will attend meetings and trainings. These need to be entered on the appropriate forms and put in the Meetings and Trainings binder in the Office Coordinator office.
14. Phone Lines-Each employee will have their own phone line. Each employee should make sure their outgoing voice message is up to date and pertinent. Employees should return phone calls within a reasonable amount of time, especially getting back to clients. The main phone number goes directly to voicemail asking the caller to leave a detailed message and stating an appropriate staff member will return their call as soon as possible. Any employee can listen to the messages and route the calls to the appropriate employee (there is no set employee to do so). Most callers are possible Program Participants who are seeking services. These calls should be evenly distributed among the Family Support Specialists. Every effort should be made to "clear" the main phone line at the end of the day (there should be no calls waiting on the main line at the end of the day).
15. STARS-Each client who receives an assessment needs to be entered into STARS as quickly as possible. Family Support Specialists need to enter household information into STARS or they can give the assessment to Jess to do so. After a household is seen, all information will be put into STARS. If additional documentation is forthcoming, wait to request a service until all documentation is in. If the household doesn't have all documentation and does not come back, the Family Support Specialist or Jess will enter all required information into STARS using a best guess for information not brought in. All households will receive at least an Information and Referral service. Family Stability and Support (FSS) will be requested when a household is deemed eligible for services after providing the proper documentation. Family Economic Development (FED) will be given if the family's goal is to increase income due to earnings and can be requested at any time during ongoing support services. It should take no more than three business days from the initial assessment to enter a household in STARS and request the appropriate service(s) (assuming all documentation is in). If a household does not bring in all documentation, make another appointment to do so. If they still do not bring in all documentation, let them know we cannot proceed. The household will then be entered into STARS with I&R requested.
16. FED and FSS Program Participants- All households who provide the appropriate documentation are considered in FSS and some in FED (if working on the outcome "increased income due to earnings"). Program Participants need to have their documentation and progress updated as necessary and at least every six weeks. At this time a self-sufficiency score needs to be updated and documented. If anything changes

in a Program Participant's household (address, phone number, income, etc.), this needs to be updated in STARS. When a new CSBG year begins, Program Participants need to be requested appropriate services in STARS for the new year.

17. Faxes and Mail-The FAX machine is located in the main office. Incoming mail is brought by DeKalb County Health Department (DCHD) staff and put in the mail box hanging on the wall just outside the Office Coordinator office. Outgoing mail can be put in the box at the DCHD receptionist desk.
18. Support Services Incentives-All households actively participating in comprehensive support services are eligible to receive incentives. These incentives are gift cards from Wal-Mart, gas stations, and grocery stores. A client may receive an incentive for their initial program eligibility, attendance (every other successfully completed appointment for the first two months), and goals accomplished. Incentives are limited. Family Support Specialists need to keep this in mind when distributing incentives. There is an informational sheet that provides incentive information in more detail.
19. Technology Resource Area-DCCA offers households who are actively participating in comprehensive support services the opportunity to use the technology resource area. Program Participants have access to computers, phone, fax, and printer for working on activities highlighted on their Goal Action Plan. A Program Participant may use the technology resource area any time DCCA is open and a staff member is available to supervise. Times may occur when a Program Participant will be asked to leave due to the unavailability of a staff person. The technology resource area is meant for Program Participants to work on their own. If a Program Participant needs assistance with what they're working on, they should schedule an appointment with their Family Support Specialist for one on one assistance. If the issue is a technical one, any available staff can take the time to address the issue. Program Participants need to check in with a staff member before they use the technology resource area. Staff will then log them in the card catalog.