

Guidance to Programs during the COVID-19 State of Emergency

1) Continuity of Services

- a) GOAL: Protect clients, staff and others.
- b) **The Department encourages Programs to continue to be innovative and provide virtual contacts to promote client engagement and deliver service interactions that are documented and counted as program contacts.** Suggestions include using tools like, WebEx & Microsoft Teams until the Stay at Home order (Executive Order 121) is lifted or expires. ***Doing your best is what we ask.***
 - i) Staff are Key to Continuity –
 - (1) Staff time – in addition to the programmatic contacts staff can make using technology, COVID-19 guidance recommends deep cleaning of frequently touched surfaces and spaces, including offices, program spaces, and vehicles.
 - (2) Training is required in policy; therefore, staff could benefit from training assignments of appropriate web-based training during this time.

2) Continuity of Funding

- a) **Goal:** Consistent disbursement of funds to programs through June 2020 and into FY 2020-21 as Counties can complete their funding decisions for 20-21.
 - i) Funding is set for FY 19-20 and we have legislatively approved amounts for 20-21.
 - ii) We will monitor revision timelines considering JCPC schedules due to the emergency.
 - iii) Discretionary Funds – to support urgent needs for program operations, and improved access to web and telephonic means to engage with clients and families and follow-up.
 - iv) External Assistance - The Department will provide on-going information related to aid or loan resources being provided due to this national crisis, sharing this information with counties, JCPCs and programs via email.

3) Flexibility and Variances from Policy – The Department recognizes that that the current COVID-19 emergency orders will impact all of the state’s local, state and federal operations and will impact the operations that effect the planning and funding cycles related to JCPCs and the programs that they fund. Here are examples of likely variations:

- (1) Programmatic Contacts –
 - (a) While contacts may not physically be in person –use of technology can assist with continuation of services. See **ATTACHMENT C** for examples of creative strategies and resources
 - (b) May be shorter than is typical (i.e. 1- hour skills session via video conference rather than 2 hours)
 - (c) May be individual instead of group
 - (d) May be limited by resources of the family and match with agency technology (i.e. Facetime unavailable if client has Android phone vs. iPhone, but possibly other applications such as WhatsApp may be useful)

- (e) May include distribution and discussion of appropriate staff-selected web-based resources
 - (f) Documentation must include: mode of communication used, the rationale for that modality (i.e. COVID-19), duration of intervention, and that the client or legal guardian provided informed consent. Staff making the contact may only provide the service they are qualified to provide.
- (2) Duration – Focus on engagement may possibly not allow for full contact content as under normal circumstances. In many cases it is acceptable to extend your typical timeline with clients to complete services as designed.
- (3) SPEP – Counting SPEP service hours will vary by type of service and can be addressed with your consultant on an individualized basis.
- (4) Referrals and Admissions – Please be advised that juvenile court counseling services are deemed essential and juveniles continue to need services. Programs should continue to receive referrals and log referral information into NCALLIES. *This establishes program need for juveniles in your judicial districts.* The Department encourages the use of technology to do intake and admission processes. See **ATTACHMENT C** for examples of creative strategies and resources.
- (5) Follow-Up – In addition to periodic Check-Ins by your Consultant, please access the Q & A opportunity via a forthcoming North Carolina Association of Community Alternatives for Youth (NCACAY) Webinar being hosted by NC Child